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Message Text

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64
ACTION ARA-20

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, CS
SUBJECT: LA NACION ANALYZES VESCO DECISION

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN A FULL-PAGE EDITORIAL JULY 27, SAN JOSE'S LEADING NEWSPAPER LA NACION ANALYZED THE REASONS THAT THE US EMBASSY'S LEGAL CASE AGAINST ROBERT VESCO FAILED IN COSTA RICA. THE EDITORIALIST BELIEVES THE CASE WAS LOST BECAUSE THE EMBASSY PRESENTED A TECHNICALLY WEAK LEGAL CASE, BUT THE COURT'S DECISION SHOULD NOT BE MISTAKEN AS A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH FOR VESCO. END SUMMARY.

1. THE EDITORIAL BEGINS NOTING THAT FOREIGN OBSERVERS MAY WRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE COSTA RICAN COURTS HAD BEEN INFLUENCED BY POLITICS SYMPATHETIC TO VESCO. THE REASON FOR THE COURT'S DECISION, THE EDITORIAL CONTINUES, WAS THAT THE EMBASSY'S WEAK CASE WAS DUE TO "LACK OF NATIONAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE" THAT SHOULD HAVE CONSIDERED ALL THE PRECEDENTS AND ASPECTS OF THE CASE. THE EMBASSY, THE EDITORIAL POINTS OUT, "SIMPLY PETITIONED INVOCATION OF LEE TREATY" WITHOUT EVEN STUDYING THE PROBLEM TO DETERMINE HOW THE CASE MEASURED WITHIN COSTA RICAN JURISPRUDENCE. EDITORIAL ADDS THAT IN LOCAL LEGAL CIRCLES, IT IS BELIEVED THE EMBASSY COMMITTED A "FAUX PAS" WHICH, GIVEN THE CASE'S IMPORTANCE TO US JUSTICE, SHOULD HAVE BEEN HANDLED WITH "BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF OUR (COSTA RICAN) INSTITUT-
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IONAL TRADITIONS."

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2. THE EDITORIAL SUGGESTS THAT THE COURTSWOULD HAVE DECLGED AGAINST VESCO IF THEY HAD BEEN PRESENTED WITH A BETTER CASE. HOWEVER, IT POINTS OUT, THE VESCO LAWYERS HAD NO DIFFICULTY FINDING THE "ACHILLE'S HEEL" OF THE CASE AND THE DECISION CAME, THEREFORE, AS NO SURPRISE. THE COSTA RICAN PUBLIC, THE EDITORIAL ADDED, SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT THE COURT DECISION DOES NOT EXONERATE VESCO OF ANYTHING THAT HE HAS DONE BECAUSE THE JUDGEMENT WAS DUE TO ERRORS OF FORM RATHER THAN CONTENT. THIS DECISION, THE EDITORIAL ENDS, ABOUT WHICH THE PUBLIC IS UNEASY, DOES NOT FREE VESCO OR HIS ASSOCIATES FROM THE CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST HIM AND "ONLY HISTORY WILL HAVE THE LAST WORD ON THE JUDGEMENT".

3. COMMENT: LA NACION, WHICH HAS BEEN A VIGOROUS CRITIC OF VESCO'S INOLVEMENT IN COSTA RICAN AND WITHPRESIDENT FIGUERES, SEEMS TO CORRECTLY REFLECT A LARGE SEGMENT OF PUBLIC OPINION IN SAN JOSE. THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE OTHER PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE DECISION, ALTHOUGH ALL PAPERS HAVE RUN AS A PAID AD A CHANNEL 11 COMMENTARY PRAISING THE DECISION AND COSTA RICA AS A "BASTION OF LAW".
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